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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (Category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV)

[3 February 1994]

Situation of human rights in El Salvador

For many years, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples (ILRLP) has been closely following the situation of the people of El Salvador.

January 1992 saw the signing of the Peace Accords, which marked the end of the armed conflict in El Salvador and initiated a process, in particular at the legal level, for the country's transition to democracy.

El Salvador is today on the brink of one of the major outcomes of that process, the elections due to be held in March 1994.

At this stage, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples would draw the Commission's attention to the real obstacles that still stand in the way of progress towards democracy and, in particular, to the difficulty of ensuring that human rights are effectively safeguarded in El Salvador.

The League would like to pay tribute to the considerable work done by the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), in particular by its Human Rights Division.

In this connection, the League's main concern is to work together with all other non-governmental organizations in building peace and promoting democracy, a task begun by the international community.

I. Bearing the above in mind, the League believes it important to point out the violations of human rights, some very serious, which are now taking place in El Salvador and which are hindering the process of peace-building and democratization sponsored by both the international community and human rights organizations.

The League draws attention to the threats that have been made against activists and leading members of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and other opposition parties and to the murders to which many of them have fallen victim. These crimes have already drawn a response from the international community, as shown by the letter sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 3 November 1993 to the President of the Security Council (S/26689) and the note by the President of the Security Council dated 5 November 1993 (S/26695). The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador has reported the serious nature of the human rights violations. The murders indicate a resurgence of illegal death squads; the League is very concerned that such groups can continue to operate with impunity to the point of endangering the partial results so far achieved in the implementation of the Peace Accords and of hindering the normal and unrestricted progress of the elections in March.

At the same time, there have been significant and disturbing delays in giving real effect to the Peace Accords. Reference is made here only to the delay in the deployment of the National Civil Police and the continuing presence of the National Police, which was to be phased out under the Accords.

There have also been serious setbacks to the programmes for the reintegration of ex-combatants and the transfer of lands; the recovery of weapons from the armed forces is not proceeding as it should. On all these points, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (S/26790 of 23 November 1993) provides important information.

Lastly, the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth remain largely a dead letter. The League has already expressed its concern and its disappointment following the decision of the National Assembly to adopt an amnesty act, which in principle is not in line with the Commission's recommendations or the Peace Accords and has also allowed the release of those sentenced for the killing of the Jesuit priests.

II. The findings are not yet altogether positive, although much has been achieved since January 1992.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples suggests that the Commission on Human Rights should consider the situation in El Salvador and adopt a strongly worded resolution on the matter.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples considers that the Commission, like the Security Council, should condemn the politically motivated violence in El Salvador and, pending the full implementation of the Peace Accords, propose an impartial and independent investigation of the illegal armed groups (see Security Council resolution 888 (1993) of 30 November 1993).

In its resolution 48/149 of 20 December 1993 on El Salvador, the General Assembly expressed its concern and condemned the acts of violence indicating renewed activity by the illegal armed groups that may hamper the electoral process.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples thus considers that the Commission on Human Rights should examine the question of El Salvador under the agenda item "Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world".

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples also suggests that the Commission should renew the mandate of the Independent Expert, Mr. P. Nikken, and advise the Government of El Salvador not to hinder the performance of his mission, as it has recently been doing.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples is persuaded that there is still hope in El Salvador and that the Commission's role is to do whatever is necessary to promote the fulfilment of expectations for peace and democracy. This is a feasible aim and the international community should make every effort to achieve it.